

VISIT...

Peyote/Mescaline

Profile

Peyote (*Lophophora williamsii* or *Lophophora diffusa*) is a spineless cactus with small protrusions called “buttons” that are used for psychoactive hallucinogenic purposes. Mescaline, an amphetamine, is the principal active psychedelic compound in peyote. It is a hallucinogen derived from several different cacti – the Peyote cactus that grows in the southwestern United States and Mexico, the San Pedro cactus (*Trichocereus pachanoi*) found in Peru,¹ or the Peruvian Torch cactus (*Trichocereus peruvianus*). The limited growing area of this cactus restricts drug supply severely, so it is a common practice to sell other drugs such as PCP or LSD as mescaline.² Mescaline can also be produced in a laboratory by chemical synthesis.³ A white crystalline material, mescaline sulfate, is the pure form of mescaline and can be put in capsule form.⁴ Peyote and mescaline are listed as Schedule I hallucinogens under the Controlled Substances Act in the United States.⁵ In a rare exception, “the nondrug use of peyote in bona fide religious ceremonies of the Native American Church, and by members of the Native American Church” is legal.⁶

History

Peyote is one of the oldest psychedelic agents known. Aztecs of Pre-Columbian Mexico who considered the cactus magical and divine often used it.⁷ Peyote use then spread from Mexico to North America to other Native American groups, who used it to treat illnesses, communicate with spirits, and for highly religious ceremonies.⁸ In 1918, the Native American Church was formed to preserve their right to use peyote.

Mescaline has been used for centuries because of the mystical experiences that it is purported to induce.⁹ Until the landmark free exercise decision handed down by the U.S. Supreme Court in *Employment Division v. Smith* 494 U.S. 872 (1990), members of the Native American Church had the legal right to use mescaline-containing peyote in religious ceremonies.¹⁰

Ernst Spath first synthesized peyote in 1919.¹¹

Methods of Use

Peyote

The peyote cactus contains buttons that can be cut from the root and dried. The buttons can either be chewed or soaked in water to produce an ingestible liquid.¹² Peyote buttons may also be ground into a powder and then “smoked with a leaf material, such as cannabis or tobacco.”¹³

Mescaline

